

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A tool changer comprising a master module and a tool module includes a rapid-connect communication bus between the master and tool modules. A unique tool identification number, along with other tool-related information, may be transmitted from
5 the tool module to the master module within about 250 msec of the master and tool modules coupling together. The master module includes a robotic system communications network node connected to the rapid-connect communication bus, and operative to transmit data between the tool and the network via the communication bus. The need for a separate network node in the tool module is obviated, reducing cost and
10 reducing the start-up time required to initialize such a network node upon connecting to a new tool. The rapid-connect communication bus may be a serial bus.